

OPEN SPACE COUNCIL
MINUTES
Legislative Hall
Senate Hearing Room, Second Floor
Dover, DE
December 8, 2009
9:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council Members:

Lynn W. Williams, Chairperson
Paul Boswell, Esq.

Advisory to:

Ex-Officio:

Charles A. Salkin, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

Guests:

Charlotte Herbert, Delaware Association of Realties (DAR)
Roger Jones, the Nature Conservancy
Marlene Mervine, Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy

Staff:

David Small, Deputy Secretary, DNREC
Timothy Slavin, Director, State Historical & Cultural Affairs
Patrick Emory, Director, Fish & Wildlife, DNREC
Jennifer Campagnini-Walls
Matthew Chesser, Parks & Recreation, DNREC
Shelley DiBona, Fish & Wildlife, DNREC
Austin Short, Forestry, DDA
Elena Stewart, Parks & Recreation, DNREC
Michael Valenti, Forestry, DDA
Ron Vickers, Parks & Recreation, DNREC
Beth Emerson, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

I Call to Order/Announcements

Mrs. Lynn Williams, Chairperson, called the regular Open Space Council meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. She welcomed Council members, visitors, and staff and asked for announcements.

- Mrs. Williams announced she had received a letter of resignation from Mr. Harvey Marvel. She drafted a letter thanking him for his service on the Council. Mr. Marvel, Mr. Hayward, Mr. Boswell, and Mrs. Williams were the remaining original council members from 1990. She said Mr. Boswell was a steadfastly loyal member of the Council.
- Mrs. Williams distributed an announcement for a Wetlands program from Delaware Nature Society. The event is in January and February 2010 in Wilmington and Georgetown.

II Minutes of September 15, 2009 Meeting

Mrs. Williams could not approve the September 15, 2009 minutes, as there was no quorum. She postponed voting for minutes to the March 9, 2010 meeting.

III Financial Report

Mr. Ron Vickers presented the financial report. Current balance from FY'09 funds allocated on 6/30/2009 is \$4,338,855.18. Additional anticipated reimbursements are \$995,000 from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) and \$300,000 from a Wildlife Restoration grant. There are four previously approved projects totaling \$5,284,639.67. The remaining balance available through 6/29/10 is \$349,215.51. The caveat is receiving all reimbursement funds. The FY'10 Bond Bill appropriated \$2,550,000 is due June 30, 2010. There are two approved projects from this future funding: Forest Legacy match for a Glatfelter project and the NVF project amounting to \$2,100,000. The remaining balance for FY'10 funding is \$450,000.00.

There were two settlements since the last meeting: (1) Christina River SRA – Newark Anglers, and (2) Sussex Stand Alone - Shelah Branch Farm.

Mr. Vickers wished to poll Council on receiving an electronic copy of the 16 page Open Space Inventory rather than a printout. Will raise question at the next meeting.

IV Agency and Public Presentations

Mrs. Williams invited guests to introduce themselves and present information before the Council.

- Roger Jones, from The Nature Conservancy, spoke in support of recommending the purchase of the Port Mahon property. The Division of Fish and Wildlife would purchase property from TNC at a bargain sale. His organization is also recommending increasing the Open Space funding to \$6,000,000.
- Pat Emory, Division Director of Fish & Wildlife also spoke in support of the Port Mahon project.
- Marlene Mervine from the Nanticoke River Watershed Conservancy said her organization will request increased funding at upcoming budget hearings.

State Resource Areas

Mrs. Jennifer Walls provided the Council with an update on action related to the State Resources Areas (SRA). A policy subgroup approached the Conservation Fund about working on developing methodologies for standards and criteria for SRAs based on TCF's environmental network reports. TCF was not able to meet some of the current SRA timelines. However, they were very willing to work with staff on training. The tentative plan is for Mike Krumrine, GIS specialist in the Division of Parks and Recreation, attend a training workshop on the spatial analysis components of the TCF methodology. Staff also received feedback from the Secretary's Office that efforts should continue regarding development of standards and criteria for SRAs.

V Executive Session - Discussion of Site Acquisition Contracts

The Council adjourned to Executive Session at 9:25 a.m. to discuss site acquisition contracts. The Council returned to Open Session at 9:58 a.m.

VI Project Recommendations

Mrs. Williams acknowledged the Council's receipt of information regarding a federal Forest Legacy project known as the Chesapeake Headwaters. On behalf of the Council, she sent a letter of support to the Delaware Department of Agriculture requesting U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Legacy funds to purchase a conservation easement on approximately 580 acres of forestlands near Trap Pond State Park. If project is selected it may require future Open Space funds for match.

Council members received information on and supported the acquisition of Port Mahon-TNC. Property to be purchased with oil spill damage assessment funds, not Open Space money.

Council members received information on and supported the acquisition of the Niblett property on Broad Creek. This is a donation.

Council members received information on the Masten property, located on Milford Neck. Council did not take action because of the lack of a quorum.

Mr. Chesser presented an update on the NVF project regarding the purchase of a conservation easement, ongoing negotiations with the neighbors, appraisals, and site remediation actions with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

VII Next Meeting and Adjournment

The Council meeting dates for 2010: March 9, June 8, September 14, and December 14. Dates may change when Council has quorum.
Meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: Ron Vickers